

get in the car, put in a key, the engine turns on—all of this is because of energy, and that is before you get to work. No one even thinks about the role energy plays in our life. That is why it is important for us to understand we have a very serious energy security issue in this country. No. 2, we have a serious issue of the need to construct new kinds of energy and also to use the existing energy differently or produce energy differently and reduce carbon emissions.

I chair the committee that funds most of our energy projects. I chair the Senate Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee. It funds the energy and water issues, obviously. There is a lot going on, for example, that I think is so exciting that can unlock our opportunity to continue to use coal. Some say you cannot use coal. Of course, you can. Our science and our technology can clearly decarbonize the use of coal, which is our most abundant resource. Why would we not want to use coal in the future?

There are unbelievable things going on Dr. Craig Venter, a scientist not far from here, is working on this issue: developing synthetic microbes that underground would turn coal into methane. These microbes would consume the coal and turn it into methane. Pretty interesting to me.

There is a guy in California who has an idea, a patented idea I don't know if it works, but they insist it is the silver bullet. He takes the entire flue gas from a coal plant and he mineralizes it through some patented process he has. It does not separate CO<sub>2</sub>. It mineralizes all of it and turns it into a product that is harder than concrete and more valuable than concrete and produces, as a result, the cost of carbon at almost near zero. Maybe that is the silver bullet. I don't know. There are dozens of examples like it that are very exciting and very interesting.

I started algae research after it had been discontinued for 15 years—single-cell pond scum, that green scum on the pond out on the farm—algae. You take the CO<sub>2</sub> that is released from a coal plant, feed it to an algae farm and grow algae. It increases its bulk in hours. Then you can harvest the algae and produce diesel fuel. Get rid of the CO<sub>2</sub> and produce a fuel. That is called value added. That is called beneficial use of carbon.

There are others now—Dr. Craig Venter is involved in this, along with Exxon—who have projects in which they create algae that excretes lipids directly. Instead of harvesting algae and destroying it for the purpose of acquiring a diesel fuel, it excretes lipids directly which, with very little manipulation, is a fuel.

One of the scientists with the Sandia National Laboratory talked about the development of a solar heat engine in which you put CO<sub>2</sub> on one side and water on the other and you fracture the molecules and thermochemically recombine them and you have methanol—water, CO<sub>2</sub>, develop a fuel.

All these ideas are opportunities for us to continue to use coal and at the same time reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

My point is, I think we ought to be doing a lot of everything with respect to producing a better energy future for this country and with respect to reducing the carbon in our future. I am not somebody who is a naysayer about climate change at all. I expect to be a part of discussions about how to reduce carbon in our future. But I do believe it will be a profound mistake if we do not advance the very policies we have the opportunity to advance in the Congress, in the Senate, the very policies that move us in the direction of reducing carbon and making us more energy secure.

To date, what we have had is all this breathlessness about you have to do a climate change bill right now and you cannot take up energy legislation until you take up climate change legislation. You know what, I do not agree.

I hope that high on the list of the agenda next year for this Congress is to say: We have a serious energy security problem and we have a serious issue with respect to carbon. Let's deal with both. If anybody believes this country can continue to have a 70-percent addiction for oil from foreign countries, they are dreaming. That is not something that will be sustainable in the long term. It undermines this country's economy to have that kind of addiction to foreign oil.

So how do we address this issue and fix it? We address it with thoughtful policies inside this country—to increase efficiency, increase conservation, increase production, and increase production in the right way that protects our planet. All these things are possible.

I guess I have spoken six or eight times on the Senate floor about these issues, not that anybody is listening so much I guess. But it is all health care all the time right now. Health care is not unimportant. I happen to think among the first things on the agenda is, A, financial reform which restores confidence. That was important because a bunch of high fliers steered this country into the ditch. We have to make sure people think that will not happen again; then, second, restarting the economic engine and putting people to work—jobs; third, dealing with energy which has to do with the very security of virtually everything we do to create jobs in this country. All these are important issues.

My hope is, when the calendar turns and January comes, we will have the opportunity to grab and seize the progress that was made in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, now nearly 6 months ago, to do the right thing for this country and to do the right thing to address climate change at the same time.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington is recognized.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor on behalf of over 10,000 constituents from my home State of Washington who have sent me letters and e-mails over the past 6 months to tell me their stories and their struggles with our health care system.

I come to the floor on behalf of the thousands who do not have the time or who do not have the resources to write to me and ask for help but who are struggling as well.

I come to the floor on behalf of small business owners, parents, senior citizens, and people with preexisting conditions, people with insurance whose premiums are skyrocketing, and people without insurance who spend their nights praying they do not have an accident or fall ill.

These people are all worried about keeping their jobs or making a mortgage payment and for whom the cost of getting sick today or being dropped from their health care plan or opening their mail to see another premium increase is too much to bear. Those are the people who deserve a real debate and a real plan, not distortions or silly distractions, such as conversations about how many pages are in this health care bill. What is more important than the number of pages in this health care bill is the help within those pages for businesses and families across this country.

I have watched, day after day, as our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have come down to this floor. They have made outrageous claims. They have handed out reams of paper and stacked copies of the Senate bill on top of copies of the House bill to try and turn a serious debate into a sideshow. But if my colleagues on the other side want to focus on pages, fine, let's focus on pages.

Beside me is a photo of a woman named Doreen Kelsey. In front of Doreen is a stack of papers. Those are hundreds upon hundreds of pages of forms and rejection letters and appeals and denials from her insurance company. These are pages that have taken hours and hours to fill out and that have stood between Doreen's husband and the care he desperately needed.

I met Doreen at a roundtable I hosted in August in Spokane, WA, in my State. Doreen told me she is self-employed and isn't able to purchase her own health insurance because she has a preexisting condition. Now, luckily, she and her family have health insurance coverage through her husband Tony's employer. She told me she and Tony thought their family had good insurance coverage. But when he asked for a colonoscopy, they soon discovered the lengths to which insurance companies will go to deny, to delay, and to dispute the care families such as the Kelseys assumed were included in their coverage.

Their insurance carrier told them before they would pay for this preventive care, it would have to be approved by a primary care physician. After being delayed for more than a month because of